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Seriously, is Colo. high? Yes, in several ways

Legal pot shops in the state are dishing dope at hiiiiigh prices PAGE 7

FAT BOTTOMED COPS: BY (DAIRY) QUEEN

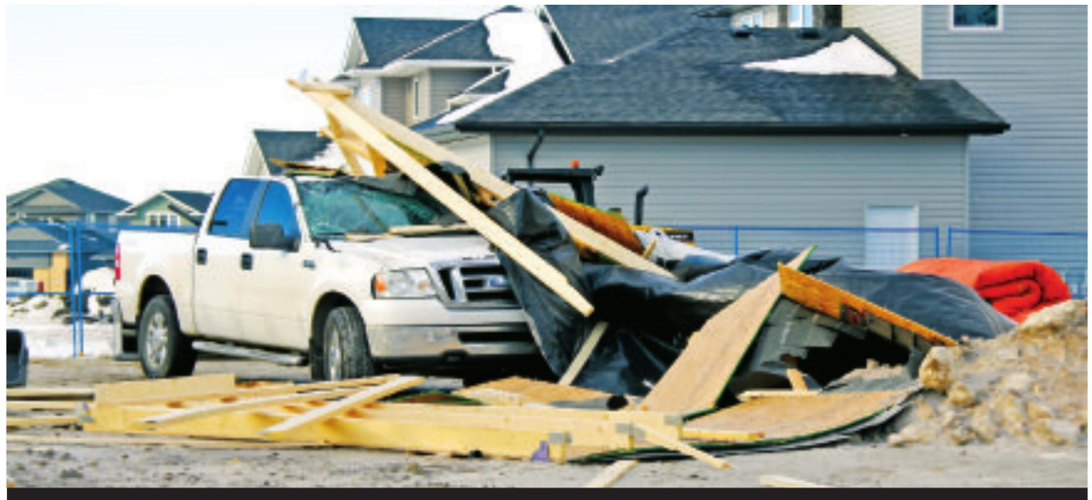
IN RUSSIA THE ROTUND GET REJECTED; IN THE U.S., POLICE ARE LESS FIT THAN HALF THE POPULATION: STUDY PAGE 6

Winter winds whip southern Sask.

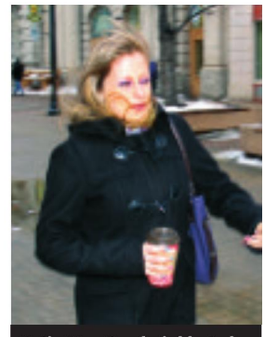
Hold on to your hats!

Regina officials ready for potential wind problems; gusts of more than 100 km/h recorded in Saskatoon

MORGAN MODJESKI
Metro in Saskatoon



A piece of roof blown off a construction site by high winds in Saskatoon's Stonebridge neighbourhood can be seen on a crushed pickup truck on Wednesday afternoon. MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO IN SASKATOON



Katie-Mae Brooks is blasted by wind gusts in the F.W. Hill Mall in downtown Regina. ROSS ROMANIUK/METRO

Saskatchewan's two major urban centres were hit hard by high winds on Wednesday, as gusts of 100 km/h caused damage in Saskatoon and put Regina officials on alert.

The gale-force gusts in Saskatoon bent a cellphone tower and caused a pickup truck to be crushed by a piece of roof blown off a construction site. The wind also knocked over electrical lines and toppled trees, causing power outages.

The Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools division was not dismissing students during the lunch hour because of high winds and blowing debris. Parents were asked to pick up their children or drop off their lunches.

Officials with the City of Saskatoon said they had been alerted by Environment Canada on Tuesday evening.

"As a result of that notification, we were able to issue a Level 1 EOC (Emergency Operations Centre) alert, which brought the communications between all departments in the city a bit more focused on co-ordination," said Ray Unrau, the city's director of emergency planning.

John Paul Cragg, a severe weather meteorologist with Environment Canada, said winds were expected to remain strong through Wednesday night before gradually diminishing.

Jay O'Connor, manager of emergency management with the City of Regina, said there were no reports of damage by the afternoon — even as many pedestrians downtown appeared to struggle at times while walking in and around F.W. Hill Mall and 11th Avenue.

"We just maintain that same level of readiness," O'Connor said of municipal preparations.

"The first responders, if they do get called to something that is related to the wind event and it seems like something that could either grow or be replicated … that information is passed through, and we respond to it at that time."

The wind wreaked havoc in rural areas, as well. School buses were shut down in the Biggar area, northwest of Saskatoon, due to slippery roads and gusting winds. That came after a bus with seven children slid into a ditch when the driver lost control. No one was hurt.

Mounties in Swift Current advised against travel on Highway 4 north of that city.

Officials in Saskatoon and Regina said departments within the municipalities would continue to monitor weather conditions through the night.

WITH FILES FROM THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Commission vote

Strip-club limits approved

The city's planning commission is recommending that newly legalized strip clubs be permitted only in Regina's industrial areas.

On Wednesday, the commission unanimously approved minor changes to a bylaw governing adult entertainment — reaffirming a buffer of about 182 metres between such establishments and residential properties.

While strip clubs would be allowed in industrial areas, the buffer requirement would override any permitted zoning.

The move ensures that strip clubs maintain the buffer distance from homes even in industrial areas.

The commission's recommendation will be considered by city council at its Feb. 27 meeting.

METRO

Charity

Gene Simmons to auction truck for children's hospital

Rock star Gene Simmons is helping to boost the health of children in Saskatchewan by auctioning off a custom 1956 Ford F-100 truck.

The truck, named Snakebit, will be up for sale this week at auctioneers Barrett-Jackson in Arizona, with proceeds going to the new Children's Hospital of Saskatchewan.

The hospital is in Saskatoon, where the Kiss bass player's wife, Shannon Tweed, grew up.

Premier Brad Wall says the highest a '56 Ford has sold for at Barrett-Jackson is $180,000, and the hope is that this auction will raise even more money for hospital equipment.

Snakebit was built in Saskatoon and the front end of the revamped truck is a Shelby Mustang.

Wall — a self-confessed car nerd who owns a 1967 Dodge Coronet — says even though he's not a Ford guy, the truck is beautiful.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Townhouse blaze started on kitchen stove: Fire marshal

Gladmer Park. Woman and her five children, recently moved from Afghanistan, in need of clothing and other items

Fire Marshal Randy Ryba says the Gladmer Park townhouse blaze was ignited on a kitchen stove in a unit rented by a woman and her five children. Inset: The four-unit building was damaged to the point that it will probably be demolished. MARCO VIGLIOTTI/METRO; INSET: ROSS ROMANIUK/METRO

Combustibles igniting from a stove-top element have been pinpointed as the cause of a fire that destroyed townhouse units in the Gladmer Park area on Jan. 9, Regina investigators said Wednesday.

Fire officials said the blaze, which started in a home rented by a mother and her five children, quickly spread from the stove to kitchen cupboards — eventually engulfing the rest of the unit and adjoining sections of the two-storey, four-unit building just east of Broad Street.

"Some of the key components on the stove … were completely destroyed in the fire, but we can conclusively agree that the element was on at the time," Randy Ryba, the city's fire marshal, told reporters.

"It's probably a careless cooking incident."

As a result of the "extensive damage" caused by the blaze, Ryba added, the townhouse complex facing Quinn Drive will most likely be torn down.

The mother and her children — the eldest aged nine — escaped without injuries, as did other tenants of the townhouse building.

The family, originally from Afghanistan, is staying for now at a Regina hotel paid for by the local Red Cross chapter, said Hazrat Ali Talash, a neighbour and friend of the mother.

Talash housed the family at his home temporarily after the blaze.

"They're (doing) good, (but) feeling bad because they (have) no home," he told Metro.

"They're six people staying in one room.... It's hard."

Talash noted that he and his wife are continuing to provide food for the family, which needs clothing and other everyday items after losing all its possessions in the fire.

"She doesn't have other family (or friends in Regina)," Talash said of the mother.

"I've known her for (the past) three months."

Anyone wanting to donate to the family is advised by the Red Cross to call 1-800-418-1111 or go online to redcross.ca.

MARCO VIGLIOTTI/METRO

Officials change stance on 'Got Land?' sweaters

School and First Nations officials in a Saskatchewan town have backtracked after asking students who wear sweaters with the phrase "Got Land? Thank an Indian" to turn the clothes inside-out.

Several students at Balcarres Community School, about 90 kilometres northeast of Regina, began wearing sweaters with the printed slogan last spring, according to principal Brian Endicott.

Some community members found the clothing offensive, leading school and First Nations leaders to initially ask students to wear it inside-out.

"We never banned the shirt, but as a community we discussed the implications based on the concerns of some vocal community members," Endicott said.

The issue was raised again on Friday when Grade 8 student Tenelle Starr, 13, wore a sweatshirt bearing the words "Got Land?" on the front and "Thank an Indian" on the back.

The message alludes to land treaties in Saskatchewan in the late 1800s between aboriginals and the Crown, enabling Europeans to live on land historically owned by First Nations people.

"I think of it as a teaching tool that could help bring awareness to our treaty lands," said Starr, a Star Blanket First Nation member.

Many have praised what they see as Starr's bravery for continuing to wear the shirt despite the controversy.

"I feel proud of what I have done and I'm just really glad to be sending the message out," Starr said.

A school assembly has been held with the reserve's chief, Michael Star, and its council to give students background on the message. Endicott said it "was very positive and allowed students to learn from the situation, and to ask any questions they may have had."

The school and the First Nation's leaders have since allowed students to resume wearing the clothing with the slogan on school grounds.

SARAH TAGUIAM/METRO

Hempology 101. Club riles UBC student admin with weed-vapourizer party

Ain't no party like a UBC vapour party — because that's the kind of party that can get you expelled.

Student administrators at the University of British Columbia are investigating the campus's Hempology 101 club for holding an indoor 4:20 meeting last week enticing people to "stay dry and get high" in the Student Union Building (SUB).

Club treasurer Corbin Manson did not respond to repeated interview requests from Metro, but after he spoke to the UBC student newspaper, the club posted a statement on its website calling the party "wildly successful."

"I want to set the record straight: There is no conclusive evidence that Hempology 101 has broken any laws," wrote one of the executives (it is unclear which one).

A staffer reaches for a vapourizer Wednesday at B.C. Marijuana Party headquarters in Vancouver.
KATE WEBB/METRO

The student paper, The Ubyssey, reported that 25 people attended the meeting and a towel was placed under the door to keep the vapour in. KATE WEBB/METRO IN VANCOUVER

Justices waver on protest-free zone rules at abortion clinics

Alan Hoyle, of Lincolnton, N.C., stands outside the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C., on Wednesday. The court heard arguments on the regulation of protests at abortion clinics and seemed likely Wednesday to strike down a Massachusetts law setting a 10-metre protest-free zone outside clinics. Liberal and conservative justices alike expressed misgivings about the law during arguments at the high court. They questioned the size of the zone and whether the state could find less restrictive ways of ensuring patient access and safety. EVAN VUCCI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ratapooey. Urban rodents carry diarrhea-causing bacteria: Study

Just when you thought the reputation of urban rats couldn't sink any lower, new research has proven the critters carry bacteria that causes diarrhea in humans.

B.C. scientists found Clostridium difficile in the poop of 13 per cent of Rattus rattus and Rattus norvegicus in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, according to research published in the Journal of Applied and Environmental Microbiology in December.

C. difficile causes diarrhea and intestinal disease in people, especially children and pets. While the study doesn't show whether rats can actually transmit the bacteria to people or other animals, it's the first to investigate whether the pests carry more than just the plague.

The research is part of the Vancouver Rat Project, the first study in Canada to research urban rat populations to see if they pose a health risk.

It involves samples from more than 700 wild rats from one of Canada's poorest neighbourhoods, a veritable hotbed of the creatures due to its old buildings and proximity to the port.

EMILY JACKSON/METRO IN VANCOUVER

Google showing illegal web ads

'Google must correct this.' Canada's Privacy commissioner is also pushing the company to make it easier for consumers to be heard

Google has been caught afoul of the law by displaying web ads linked to a person's health history, according to Canada's interim privacy commissioner Chantal Bernier.

An investigation by Bernier's office backed up a man's complaints that he was seeing so-called behavioural advertisements based on his web browsing history. After searching for information about devices to treat sleep apnea, he began to see ads for those devices as he browsed the web.

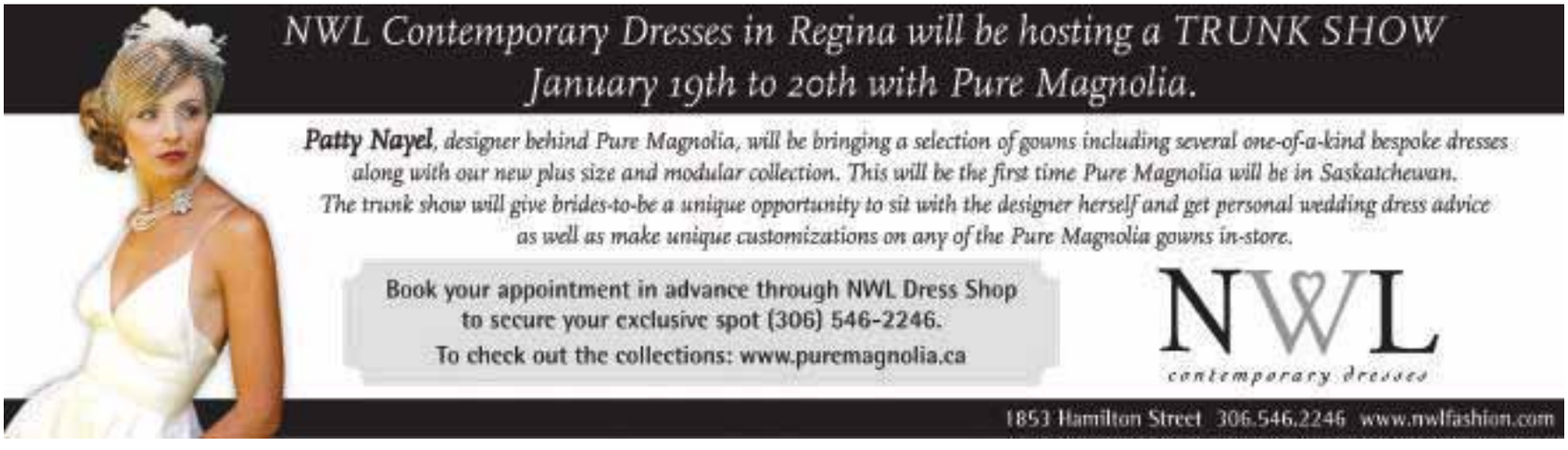
While behavioural advertising is not illegal, Canada's privacy law does not allow consumers to be targeted based on "sensitive personal information," including their health.

Google's privacy policy outlaws displaying advertisements based on race, religion, sexual orientation or health. But the Mountain View, Calif.-based company acknowledged that some advertisers using its ad-serving platform were not following the policy.

Google has pledged to upgrade the system that reviews ads for compliance, increase the monitoring of ads and provide more information to advertisers and staff about the rules.

"The monitoring system was not tight enough, not robust enough to ensure compliance, it wasn't extensive enough to deal with the volume of ads," said Bernier in an interview.

THE CANADIAN PRESS


NWL Contemporary Dresses in Regina will be hosting a TRUNK SHOW
January 19th to 20th with Pure Magnolia.
Patty Nayel, designer behind Pure Magnolia, will be bringing a selection of gowns including several one-of-a-kind bespoke dresses along with our new plus size and modular collection. This will be the first time Pure Magnolia will be in Saskatchewan.
The trunk show will give brides-to-be a unique opportunity to sit with the designer herself and get personal wedding dress advice as well as make unique customizations on any of the Pure Magnolia gowns in-store.
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To check out the collections: www.puremagnolia.ca
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Canadian who joined militants killed in Syria

Damian Clairmont. 22-year-old Calgary man is believed to have converted to Islam and joined recognized terrorist group

JEREMY NOLAIS
Metro in Calgary

Damian Clairmont FACEBOOK

A Calgary high school dropout has been killed by soldiers with the Free Syrian Army while fighting for a recognized terrorist group, according to a friend's online post.

Damian Clairmont, 22, born in Nova Scotia, is believed to have converted to Islam, joined a force called Jabhat al-Nusra and departed for Syria in late 2012 to join rebel efforts to overthrow the government of President Bashar al-Assad.

"My bro … Abu Talba al-Canadi executed by FSA!" wrote Abu Turan al-Muhaljr on Twitter, before posting a photo of Clairmont, who was known by multiple names.

Al-Muhaljr later identified the man in the photo as Clairmont and added that he "was killed while defending himself and his brothers from the FSA onslaught in Aleppo."

But Canadian Foreign Affairs officials offered no specifics on Clairmont's fate amid inquiries made Wednesday.

"We are aware of reports that Canadians have been killed in Syria," said spokesperson Jean-Bruno Villeneuve in an emailed response. "We are following the situation closely."

An unnamed Canadian security source did confirm Clairmont's death to Torstar News Service, but did not provide specifics on the circumstances.

WITH FILES FROM TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

An Indian policeman stands outside the police station, which is investigating the gang-rape of a Danish tourist in New Delhi, India, Wednesday. TSERING TOPGYAL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Police say Danish tourist gang-raped in New Delhi

A 51-year-old Danish tourist was gang-raped near a popular shopping area in New Delhi after she approached a group of men for directions, police said Wednesday.

Police spokesman Rajan Bhagat said two people were arrested after a daylong search for the suspects.

The woman also was robbed and beaten in the attack, which happened Tuesday near Connaught Place, Bhagat said. The attack is the latest crime to focus attention on the scourge of sexual violence in India.

The woman asked the men for directions to her hotel, Bhagat said. They lured her to a secluded area where they raped her at knifepoint, according to the Press Trust of India.

The woman managed to reach her hotel Tuesday evening and the owner called police.

"When she came, it was miserable," said Amit Bahl, owner of the Amax hotel in the Paharganj area. The woman was crying and "not in good shape," he said.

"I am really ashamed that this happened," said Bahl, who sounded shaken.

The woman, whose name was not released, was on her way back to Denmark, said Ole Egberg Mikkelsen, head of the Danish Foreign Ministry's consular department in Copenhagen, which handles cases involving Danes abroad. Egberg Mikkelsen said the woman had received assistance from Indian and Danish authorities, and that her next of kin had been contacted.

An Indian police official said the woman boarded a flight home Wednesday morning.

The problem of sexual violence in India has gained widespread attention since the horrific gang rape and murder of a 23-year-old woman on a moving bus in December 2012. Public fury over the case has led to more stringent laws that doubled prison terms for rape to 20 years and criminalized voyeurism and stalking.

But for many women, particularly the poor, daily indignities and abuse continue unabated and the new laws have not made the streets any safer.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cremated in Canada?

DNA test planned in body mix-up investigation

The daughter of a U.S. woman whose casket contained the wrong body says DNA tests will be performed to determine if her mother was accidentally cremated in Canada.

Lisa Kondvar discovered someone else's body in Margaret Porkka's casket last month at a New Jersey funeral home.

Porkka, 82, had died unexpectedly during a trip to St. Maarten over Thanksgiving and the family suspects her body was confused with that of a Canadian woman who died on the island around the same time.

Scott Aldridge, a detective in Barrie, Ont., says that the woman in Porkka's casket has been identified as 82-year-old Kathleen Togwell of Barrie and her body is being returned to Canada.

Kondvar said bodily fluids were recovered from a casket in Canada that might have contained Porkka's body. The family has sent her hairbrush and toothbrush for DNA testing and results are not expected until the end of the month.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

UN to question Vatican on its efforts to protect children

Pope Francis stands up during his weekly general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican Wednesday. The Holy See is gearing up for a showdown over the global priest sex-abuse scandal — it will be grilled Thursday by a UN committee in Geneva on its implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Among other things, the treaty calls for signatories to take all appropriate measures to protect children from harm. ANDREW MEDICHINI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Myanmar. Military still using rape as a weapon of war, say rights activists

A soldier in full uniform saw the seven-year-old in her front yard soon after her parents left to tend to their rice paddies in Myanmar's restive state of Shan. She said he ordered her inside the family's bamboo hut.

"He hit me and told me to take off my clothes," the girl told the tightly packed courtroom in a whisper, as her alleged assailant, Maung Win Htwe, looked on, stone-faced.

"Then … he raped me."

Rights activists in Myanmar, also known as Burma, say the army continues to use rape as a weapon of war nearly three years after President Thein Sein's nominally civilian government ended a half-century of brutal military rule. On Tuesday, the Women's League of Burma released a report documenting more than 100 rapes, almost all in townships plagued by stubborn ethnic insurgencies. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Volatile Dagestan region

Gunfight leaves 5 dead in Russia

A shootout between security forces and militants in the volatile Russian region of Dagestan killed five people, authorities said.

The gun battle broke out after militants barricaded themselves inside a home in the village of Karlanyurt, Dagestan Investigative Committee spokesman Rasul Temirbekov said.

The fatalities included three security force members and two militants.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

For the Queen. Chocolate castle, enamelled beetles among unusual gifts

Queen Elizabeth II received dozens of traditional gifts last year — but she also got some unusual items.

The High Commissioner for Bangladesh gave the Queen four enamelled Scarab beetles, and Sri Lanka's president chose a portrait of the monarch burned onto a tree trunk. The maker of Mars Bars gave her a chocolate version of Windsor Castle.

Some of the more lavish items included a family photograph in a gold frame set on a jewelled ostrich egg and a five-strand pearl necklace, given by the president of the United Arab Emirates.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

With love, from Canada

- The Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan gave Queen Elizabeth a diamond and tourmaline brooch last year.
- A Canadian artist presented Princess Anne an art print of the Queen's daughter riding a moose.

New York

Kittens break into max security jail

A litter of four kittens has found a cosy home in the least cosy of places — the basement of the maximum-security Great Meadow prison in Fort Ann in upstate New York.

The family of feral felines has been cared for by inmates and prison staff. Head electrician Bruce Porter arrives at work early so he can tend to the cats, which live in a large cage built by an inmate.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sharing food makes the heart grow fonder, at least in chimps

Two chimpanzees share a piece of watermelon at Taronga Zoo in Sydney, Australia. RICK STEVENS-TARONGA ZOO/GETTY IMAGES FILE

Love hormone. Study found both the giver and receiver of food had higher levels of oxytocin, indicating sharing makes both parties feel good

A study published Wednesday appears to confirm that friendships are forged at mealtimes, at least for our closest living relatives.

Scientists from Germany, Switzerland, Britain and the United States have found that chimpanzees who share their food have higher levels of oxytocin, known as the love hormone, than those who don't.

Oxytocin has previously been linked to bonding between mothers and their breastfeeding babies, both in primates and humans.

Roman Wittig of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany, said chimpanzees had more than twice the level of oxytocin after sharing food than after mutual grooming — another important bonding behaviour in primates.

Julia Lehmann, an evolutionary anthropologist, said the results appear to support the idea that food sharing can extend social benefits normally found in animals who are related to each other to those dining partners who aren't related. In other words, the way to a chimp's heart is through its stomach.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"We think food sharing can help spark new friendships, whereas grooming is more for confirmation of existing relationships."

Roman Wittig, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Germany

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Your country needs you ... to lose some weight

Best and brightest, but not always lightest.
Police units and armies struggle to find recruits who are fighting fit

ELISABETH BRAW
Metro World News in London, U.K.

Recently Mike Harper ran into the wife of a police officer friend on a Dallas street.

"She told me she was worried about his safety because his colleagues are overweight," he recalls.

The wife had good reason to be concerned. Even though American police officers should be fitter than average, a comprehensive study reports that they're less fit than half of the population.

"They have to be able to crawl and run," notes Harper, a fitness educator in charge of police and military programs at the Cooper Institute in Dallas.

"These are not tasks that you do every day, but it's critical that you're able to do them. It's like using a firearm. You don't need it every day, but when you do need it, it's essential that you know how."

And police officers are not the only ones with a weight problem. According to Lt.-Gen. Mark Hertling, no less than 75 per cent of civilians wanting to join the U.S. Army are ineligible due to being overweight.

And "of the 25 per cent that could join, what we found was 65 per cent could not pass the (physical training) test on the first day," he said in a speech.

"Young people joining our service could not run, jump, tumble or roll. These are the kind of things you would expect soldiers to do if you're in combat."

According to the U.S. National Center for Health Statistics, between 1959 and 2008 the percentage of men who were ineligible for military service because of their weight doubled, while the percentage of ineligible women tripled.

Even though Hollywood portrays army physical training as extremely gruelling, the fitness test for new soldiers is surprisingly low.

"Fifty push-ups, 40 sit-ups and a 1.5-mile run in less than 10 minutes," notes Stew Smith, a former Navy SEAL who now runs a fitness company for soldiers and officers.

Now armed forces and law-enforcement agencies are getting serious about fitness, enlisting companies like Smith's and the Cooper Institute to train their staff. Some, like the British Army, have even developed apps to help applicants get fit. In fact, many former elite soldiers have discovered a business niche in fitness companies.

However, fitness apps won't really make a difference, observes Smith.

"The police and military do their best with what society brings them, but this is a society-wide problem. A financially struggling population will keep eating crappy, inexpensive food."

Fat chance: While experts contend that police officers should be in prime physical state, in truth they have the same weight problem as the rest of the population. GETTY IMAGES

Stew squat: Former Navy SEAL turned fitness instructor Stew Smith puts police officers through a squatting exercise. COURTESY STEW SMITH

Russia

Rotund get rejected

In recent years, Russia's much-maligned police force has been trying to revamp its image, including tackling obesity among officers.

"The fat and paunchy will not get through," former interior minister Rashid Nurgaliyev said in 2011.

The force was literally slimmed down by 20 per cent. Police are now obliged to pass physical tests, with top performers getting a bonus salary. **EVGENIY MORUZ/ METRO WORLD NEWS IN MOSCOW**

Canadian Forces work with what they've got

It's hard enough to attract recruits to the Canadian military or police forces without worrying about fitness.

An internal Defence Department audit released last year noted that "fitness and education levels of recruits in the last five years have been slightly lower than in the past," when compounded with other factors such as mobility, changing career expectations and an aging workforce.

Recent reports show that American police and armed forces are struggling to find new recruits who satisfy the weight restriction.

It's slowly becoming the case in Canada too. The Canadian Forces have been adapting their application process to accommodate its changing applicant pool.

In 2006, the military eliminated the Canadian Forces Applicant Physical Fitness Test as a pre-enrolment screening process, with some exceptions.

Instead of a physical test right off the bat, the evaluation is done once they've been admitted to basic training. The three per cent that fail are not disqualified — rather, they are given the option to join the 90-day Warrior Fitness Training Program.

Recruits who get in shape within the 90 days are returned to basic training.

But the changes don't necessarily mean the Canadian Forces are lowering their standards to bring in more recruits, according to Christian Leuprecht, a Royal Military College and Queen's University professor who has spent years studying military demographics and recruitment.

"I think it's important to realize — just like the way companies can't expect the people who wander through the front door to have all the skills that a company might need and that a company invests in training — the Armed Forces look at the potential that the candidates bring rather than necessarily candidates that already have all the physical attributes that the organization is looking for," he said.

PHOEBE HO/FOR METRO IN TORONTO

True calibre

"I think the challenge is not necessarily recruiting the numbers. I think the challenge is recruiting the quality of individual that the Canadian Armed Forces is looking for."

Christian Leuprecht, Royal Military College and Queen's University professor

High prices a total buzzkill in Colorado

Gone to pot? As legal dispensaries bring in the green, issues have blunted enthusiasm

KIERON MONKS
Metro World News in London

There has been a party atmosphere around Colorado's marijuana dispensaries since recreational sales became legal at the turn of the year.

"People have been queuing for four to five hours," says Ryan West, an employee at a Denver dispensary. "Everyone is so excited and proud to be in the first state to legalize, and there is so much room to grow."

West is a product of that growth, hired on Jan. 1 to cope with a boom that saw sales of more than $5 million inside the first week. Fewer than 200 dispensaries are licensed to sell the drug for recreational use and that number is set to rise, while related industries such as "weed tourism" are also growing rapidly.

But there have been unintended consequences, with prices more than doubling in some cases to more than $400 US an ounce (28 grams). This is far higher than the rates of illegal dealers, allowing them to compete, despite the claims of marijuana advocates that a legal industry would replace the black market.

Illegal dealers are also benefitting from police confusion over new laws that have seen an 80 per cent drop in prosecutions since 2012, including for distribution.

Sam Walsh, left, a budtender, and facility manager David Martinez set up marijuana products at the 3D Denver's Discrete Dispensary. GETTY IMAGES FILE

Daddy, I got $500 in dragon food! Apple to refund $32M in app purchases by kids

Apple will refund at least $32.5 million US to consumers to settle a federal case involving purchases that kids made without their parents' permission while playing on mobile apps, the government announced Wednesday.

The Federal Trade Commission said Apple will make full refunds for any such in-app purchases made by kids using mobile phones and other devices, and incurring charges by accident or without parents' permission.

Apple will have to change its billing practices to make it more obvious that an actual purchase is taking place during the course of the game or app.

The commission said it had received tens of thousands of complaints about unauthorized charges.

Edith Ramirez, the agency's head, said the settlement involves mobile apps and charges racked up when kids bought things such as virtual currency or dragon food. In some cases, Ramirez said, charges ran into the hundreds and even thousands of dollars.

One parent told the FTC that her daughter had spent $2,600 US in Tap Pet Hotel, a game in which kids can build their own pet hotel. The game is free to download and play but involves in-app purchases where kids buy treats and coins for their pets.

Other consumers reported unauthorized purchases by children totalling more than $500 in the apps Dragon Story and Tiny Zoo Friends.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Clicks added up

"You cannot charge consumers for purchases they did not authorize."

Edith Ramirez, head of the Federal Trade Commission, said. According to the FTC complaint, when parents entered their password while a child played a game, Apple did not make it clear that they unwittingly may be buying something in the game the child had clicked on, such as a chest of gems or treats for a virtual pet.

Backlash to the backlash

Oil has been unfairly cast as a 'villain': Oil CEO

Canadians are being misled about the oilsands by critics and stars making "sensational" and "unfounded" allegations.

"Like a character in a Hollywood movie, oil has been cast as a villain," said the head of Cenovus Energy during a panel discussion in Toronto.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market Minute

DOLLAR 91.37¢ (+0.03¢)

TSX 13,772.58 (+80.20)

OIL $94.17 US (+$1.58)

GOLD $1,238.30 US (-$7.10)

Natural gas: $4.33 US (-$0.02)
Dow Jones: 16,481.94 (+108.08)

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THE EH-LIST: THE BEST OF CANADA

HE SAYS
John Mazerolle
metronews.ca

It's time to thank everyone you know, strike up the band (mid-sentence) and put one foot in front of the other, before a smiling woman in heels points out you're walking in the wrong direction.

Yes, it's awards season. I'd have described it better, but I didn't think I'd be called upon for this honour so I didn't prepare anything.

The Golden Globes have been handed out, the Oscar nominations were announced today, and The Canadian Screen Awards are back one year after they first combined the Genies and the Geminis into the coveted Geminenies.

The CSAs seemed to meet our country's high standards, which is why I was excited to have full, exclusive access to this year's show, which was pre-recorded yesterday and remains distinctly Canadian despite some faint U.S. echoes:

Red carpet. Oh, my. The recurring themes this year were boots and Roots! And you've never seen such an array of plaid. I don't want to give away who everyone was wearing, but let's just say it was a very good year for French designer Jacques Cousteau.

In memoriam. A video montage of all the great entertainers we lost in 2013 is intercut with smug Canucks saying, "They were Canadian, y'know" at every opportunity.

Orchestra pit. By law, 40 per cent of the orchestra's play-off music was CanCon. Also by law, 40 per cent of that was New Orleans is Sinking.

Lifetime achievement award. The City of Toronto was honoured for its recurring, lifelong film portrayal of Chicago.

Big Winners. I'm sworn to secrecy or the Trailer Park Boys will mess me up, but here are the top contenders:

Gravity Canada: Same as the American version, except Perfect Human and Everyastronaut Chris Hadfield plays the George Clooney role, meaning nobody dies, none of the space stations are destroyed, and he puts the satellites back together while holding a video town hall with schoolchildren in Sarnia.

Canadian Hustle: One hundred and thirty eight minutes of Mike Duffy coverage, captured in the tagline, "If you thought cameras weren't allowed in the Canadian Senate, think again."

Blue is the Coldest Colour: Set during February in Edmonton, the movie's lesbian love scenes aren't much to look at because they happen under 27 layers of blankets.

Her, eh?: A lonely writer falls in love with his BlackBerry. She loses most of her self-worth and he moves on to his new girlfriend Siri after a couple of weeks.

Conrad Black: Protracted Constitutional to Freedom: This stirring story brought to you with funding from Conrad Black deals with one of Canada's greatest heros as he struggles valiantly against oppression, including being thrown in jail and even stripped of his nationality. Each ticket-holder is given a dictionary and thesaurus upon entrance.

That's my sneak peek, Canada! I have very little time left but I'd just like to thank —

(New Orleans is Sinking.)

Aw, nuts. Sorry.

ZOOM

Sending up some protection

CHUNG SUNG-JUN/GETTY IMAGES

Anti-NK balloons fly over border

North Korean defectors, including former soldiers, release prophylactic-shaped balloons due to fly to the North, carrying leaflets condemning North Korean leader Kim Jong-un.

Letters on the balloons at the rally near the demilitarized zone between the two Koreas read: "End the world's worst three-generation dictatorship." METRO

By the numbers

500,000
Anti-North Korea pamphlets.

1,500
USB flash drives loaded with the Korean-language version of the online encyclopedia Wikipedia.

1,000
United States one dollar bills and DVDs detailing human rights abuses in the North.

Activist's viewpoint

"There is clearly enormous hunger for outside information in North Korea. USB keys are one of the most powerful tools, because they're small, can be hidden and shared easily, and carry massive amounts of data."

Thor Halvorssen, president of the U.S.-based Human Rights Foundation

Sending a signal: Around 50 tiny transistor radios were also included in the floating packages headed to North Korea.
CHUNG SUNG-JUN/GETTY IMAGES

Clickbait

IRENE KUAN
Metro Online

Wasting time surfing the web shouldn't be a regular activity but sometimes, you just have to. Here are some sites that I guarantee: Just one click will get you hooked.

SCREEN GRAB

ChinaSMACK: A website devoted to news about the world's most populous country is bound to be fascinating. Founded in 2008, ChinaSMACK posts stories found in Chinese media that are trending on microblogging sites like Weibo. Most of the articles have been translated from Chinese to English, so the quality of the writing isn't great, but you won't care once you start reading some of the crazy stories being talked about amongst Chinese netizens. Learn what a "human flesh search" is.

Distractify: One of the newer entries on the web, this site is similar to Buzzfeed, often posting entertaining, albeit useless articles. Wouldn't you like to learn about 'The 29 most infuriating things EVER?' Business Insider has called Distractify one of the fastest growing sites ever, with over 10 million Facebook shares since its launch in October.

Upworthy: This social media site posts viral articles that encourage debate amongst its readers. They say they will not clutter the site with "pageview-juking slideshows," but do admit the site is biased, hence "speaking the truth." It can get a little spammy with pop-up ads, since they don't make any actual money yet.

Twitter

Google is in trouble for ads based on health info searches. @metropicks asked: Do ads like this make you feel violated?

@RobbieRobb: If I search online for anything I expect it to be fair game for advertising.

@Russell_Barth: google is YET to suggust any Medical Marijuana products or sites, oddly....

Comments

RE: New facial recognition app 'creepy', says kids entertainer Raffi, published online Jan. 10

Facial recog is only getting better and will never go away. The moment we sent our single photo to the cloud, our faces became public property, worse, all your info and images on FB belong to that company, meaning that they can even sell them if they so wish

johnnyive, posted to metronews.ca

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU:
Send us your comments: reginaletters@metronews.ca

metro

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Trio is doing their mama proud

The Band Perry.
Country's singing siblings credit success to their work ethic and harmonizing on family vacations

BACKSTAGE PASS
Jacob Morgan
regina@metronews.ca

The Band Perry plays the Brandt Centre on Jan. 18. STRUT ENTERTAINMENT

On their self-titled 2010 debut as well as this past year's Pioneer album, The Band Perry has soared to the top of both the country and pop charts.

The three siblings from Mobile, Ala., tell Metro that's just the way their mama raised them.

"A lot of our earliest family memories are all musical," said lead singer Kimberly Perry, who is known for her fierce stage presence.

"Even the first time we sang a three-part harmony was on a family vacation … to the western part of the United States. One night our mother had the late-night driving shift and the three of us picked out harmonies with different songs to keep her awake."

From these humble beginnings, the group went on to become one of new country's brightest contemporary acts. Now they are headlining a world tour, which will stop in Regina at the Brandt Centre on Saturday, Jan. 18.

"It's been exciting," said drummer and multi-instrumentalist Neil of the tour.

"We've had the opportunity to play quite a few times up in Canada before — kind of one-off shows — and the energy and the excitement of the Canadian crowds have always been overwhelming."

This time around, however, they have outgrown the concert theatres they played in their early years. Luckily, their latest album is full of arena-ready tracks designed for fans to sing from the stands.

According to Kimberly, this was an intentional decision behind Pioneer.

"I think it gives you a snapshot for when you do see us live," she said. "Instead of trying to bring an album to the stage, we tried to bring the stage to life on the album."

In fact, Kimberly added, the group initially started the recording process for Pioneer with super-producer Rick Rubin but switched to working with Dann Huff in order to achieve the sound they were looking for. "Rick was a pivotal part of our song selection phase," she said. "But at the end of the day, when it came time to choose someone to produce the record, we decided to go with Dann because he's such a macro producer."

The end result is seen in such highlights as the resilient break-up song DONE., as well as the sombre ballad Don't Let Me Be Lonely.

Bassist Reid said one of the most challenging parts of making Pioneer was learning how to write while on the road.

"We had to get inspired on the run," he said.

But, as Kimberly puts it, the band's commitment to hard work is what has brought them from the backseat of their parents' car to where they are today.

Quoted

"…The first time we sang a three-part harmony was on a family vacation."
Lead singer Kimberly Perry

Liam Payne. ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Liam Payne apologizes for living on the ledge

One Direction member Liam Payne says he is sorry for being "stupid and irresponsible" after he was photographed standing on a building ledge 34 stories above the ground.

A photo published Wednesday in British tabloid the Sun shows the boy-band singer standing on the ledge of a high-rise with a city that appears to be London behind him.

The 20-year-old said in a statement that "I regret being there and having a photo taken. It was a stupid and irresponsible thing to do."

He urged fans not to imitate his "extremely dangerous" behaviour.

The band emerged from Simon Cowell's British TV series The X Factor in 2010 and became one of the world's top-selling groups, with three albums topping U.S. music charts.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Chris Pine

Pine sends regards to Russia, with no love

Chris Pine says the U.S. should have done more in the run-up to the Sochi Olympics to protest Russia's anti-gay legislation, which he calls "clearly awful, archaic, hostile nonsense."

"I think we should do more than just send gay Olympians there," the 33-year-old actor said in an interview while promoting his film Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit. "What's happening there in terms of gay rights or the lack of it is extraordinary and awful."

Pine's character tries to thwart a terror attack on the U.S. that originates in Russia and takes on a powerful Russian tech magnate in his new movie, opening Friday. It's based on the late author Tom Clancy's work but doesn't revolve around the plot of any single book. The Ryan character, portrayed in previous films by Alec Baldwin, Harrison Ford and Ben Affleck, was originally a CIA operative working during the Cold War.

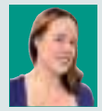
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word

Duff needed more marriage stuff from Comrie



THE WORD
Dorothy Robinson
scene@metronews.ca

It looks like Hilary Duff and her soon-to-be ex-husband, ex-NHL star Mike Comrie, tried marriage counselling for over 18 months before announcing their separation. But in the end, it wasn't enough to save their union as apparently Comrie didn't do "any of the things they'd worked on."

A source (aka: "someone from Huff's PR team") told Us Weekly, "She felt he didn't put enough effort into the relationship," they said. "He never did anything!"

One reason for the not-doing-stuff? Comrie had to retire from professional hockey in 2012 due to a constant hip injury.

A source to Life & Style echoes this sentiment. "He's in the house all day, every day," an insider tells the mag. "It was a strain on the relationship."

The couple announced two weeks ago that they "have mutually decided to an amicable separation" and will "remain best friends and will continue to be in each other's lives." The two are parents to the toddler Luca, of whom they'll have joint custody.

It certainly looks like an amicable split, with Hilary tweeting, "Mike and I are sitting here, we are so appreciative for all of your kindness & well wishes." She continued, "not an easy day but we're getting thru it together."

Gisele Bundchen

No Superbowl stress in the Bundchen-Brady house

It may be NFL playoff time in the Tom Brady-Gisele Bundchen household, but the stress doesn't carry over at home.

"He's very focused," the 33-year-old Bundchen said of Brady, quarterback for the New England Patriots, in a recent interview.

"We are both very supportive of one another in what we do. ... Of course nobody likes to lose.

"Those aren't the best days. He knows he does his best. He works extremely hard."

The three-time Super Bowl champ and his New England Patriots travel to Denver to play the Broncos on Sunday for the AFC championship.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

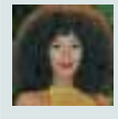
Lindsay Lohan

Lohan orders police protection for party

Lindsay Lohan likes to use protection, apparently. While in London this week, the scandal-prone starlet reportedly put in a call to the Metropolitan Police to provide an escort for a 10-foot walk from her car to a venue for a friend's birthday party, according to the Mail Online. Lohan apparently felt she needed the beefed up security detail because of a clutch of paparazzi waiting and she reportedly asked the police to arrest the photographers for loitering.

METRO

Twitter



@solangeknowles
Just called my bf to report hearing noises in the house. Go to check on my son, only to find out he's been up since 2 too. HE is the "noise".

@lenadunham
Did the thing I swore I'd never do: got a public massage at an airport kiosk. It hurts not to know yourself anymore.

@AnnaKendrick47
Aren't we supposed to have meals in pill form by now? Cause at least once a week I open my fridge and think "s—, I need to make water"

Throw out the style rule book

Fashion magazines often try to rule our wardrobes with a vice-like, arbitrary and undiscriminating grip. No one should dare to brave horizontal stripes. Under no circumstances should any woman in her 40s wear a short skirt. But it's all rubbish really, isn't it? And at the end of the day, don't we have enough intellectual capacity to know when something works and something doesn't? We enlisted Julie Ragolia, the fashion director of Man Of The World magazine who's styled Lady Gaga, to help us throw out the fashion rule book.

KIT GILBERT
Metro World News

Ripped jeans are for teenage girls and Britney Spears only

Ripped jeans are a sign of a journeyed and well-lived life. A hole in the knee reflects a willingness to fall, always an admirable quality in a woman. Paired with a smart clutch and an elegant heel, a ripped jean can be quite chic.

Wearing one pattern head-to-toe is a bad idea

A woman should never leave the house looking like a tablecloth. Accessories can help prevent that: a great belt, the right bag…solid, strong pieces can tie it all together and break up a pattern before it goes bad. I'm a big fan of patterns overall. Before wearing one pattern head to toe, consider mixing mismatched patterns. It's a surefire way to boldly own a look, and is surprisingly more subtle than one would think.

Unless you are Alexa Chung, don't attempt to conquer double denim

As a devotee to Ralph Lauren and Levi's, I've been schooled to the contrary. I live for double denim. If tones and fabric weights are in balance, I say try for a triple play. I often wear chambray shirts with vintage jeans and a denim jacket. Throw an oversized Navajo knit cardigan over the shoulder to break things up now and then.

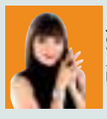
Midi skirts require six-inch heels

I'm a tomboy, and a busy fashion director, so super high heels are not at all practical on a day-to-day basis. A sleek Chelsea boot or a brogue can look just as sexy with a pencil skirt as any heel.'

Be wary of costume pieces

To a degree, yes, however one statement piece, such as an oversized necklace, or ski-goggle-inspired sunnies, are costume done right.

Twitter



JEANNE SPACE
Jeanne Beker
life@metronews.ca

TWITTER HAS BECOME A COOL AND SUCCINCT WAY OF COMMUNICATING. IT ALLOWS ME TO BE ACCESSIBLE, INSTANTLY SPEAK MY MIND AND CONNECTS ME WITH ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE. WHETHER IT'S A FASHION QUESTION OR YOU JUST WANT TO COMMENT ON LIFE'S BIGGER PICTURE, I'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU.

Exploring the wonders of the deep at the new #RipleysAquarium Speaks to the #Pisces in me! Beautiful....

With my dear, beloved friend @BryanAdams in the throes of our shoot for @YorkdaleStyle #Yorkdale50

Canadian street style

Spotted in: Toronto

Name: Alexandria

Age: 22

Occupation: Graphic design student

What she's wearing : Jacket by Wilfred, backpack and shoes by Roots, shirt by T. Babaton, blazer/jacket by Zara, necklace by Marc by Marc Jacobs and pants by Guess.

Her inspiration : "My peers, blogs and my travels."

THE KIT IS A MULTI-PLATFORM BEAUTY AND FASHION BRAND WHICH INCLUDES AN INTERACTIVE MAGAZINE AND DYNAMIC APP, A WEBSITE, KIT CHAT – AN E-NEWSLETTER PROGRAM – AND A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER SECTION TOO!

Smart storage for small spaces

From inside secret drawers to above the doors, there's always a forgotten space that can keep useful items out of sight

DESIGN CENTRE
Karl Lohnes
home@metronews.ca

Q: Although my condo is not small, I seem to have a lot of stuff and not enough storage. I need some ideas for keeping my stuff off the floor and hidden away.

A: For some people, "out of sight, out of mind" can be dangerous. Without seeing what you have, it could easily be forgotten.

Do you have a growing collection of vintage dishes or too many shoes and accessories? Perhaps it's time to purge some of your stuff instead of storing it somewhere.

But for stuff you don't want to get rid of, there are many places in our homes that are great for storing and displaying, from inside secret drawers to above the doors, there's always a forgotten space that can keep useful items out of sight.

In the sofa

Looking for a new sofa? Choose one that offers a storage drawer under the seat cushion (similar to a trundle bed) or look for a sleeper sofa that offers storage with the mattress.

Under the bed

Elevate your bed an additional five inches to hide luggage pieces or storage drawers. Rarely used luggage makes for perfect out-of-season clothing storage.

Add an extra shelf in your closet. Hanging a shelf one foot off the floor will instantly give you double the shoe storage and hanging another shelf one foot below the ceiling will offer up extra storage for out-of-season dishes or specialty baking pans.

Secrets of storage

The secret to an organized room is to make the furniture look like it's there for style, not storage.

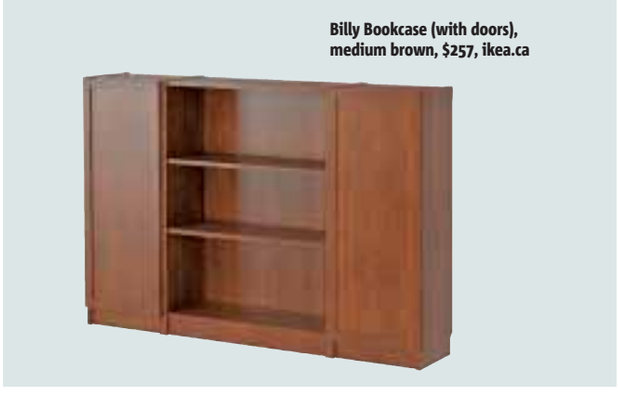
A seat with storage

The secret to an organized room is to make the furniture look like it's there for style, not storage. A padded top allows for extra seating in the foyer, at the end of the bed or along an empty wall.

Other ideas

- Tea cup hooks discreetly installed behind curtains are a great way to hide hanging scarves, necklaces and hats out of sight in a bedroom.
- Adding a 24-inch bracket or decorative floating shelf above your door entrances will help hold small containers or books.
- Think of your china cabinet for more than just dishes. A small-scale vintage cabinet can display books behind glass doors or store shoes below. Consider using vintage china cabinets in bedrooms, bathrooms or front foyer areas (use large ceramic jars on top for all sorts of inventive storage).
- Add doors to your bookcases to get the best of both worlds — to display and hide storage. Top with a piece of frosted glass or stone and you've got a truly custom storage unit with a useable top for serving or display.

Lift Storage Bench, $599, CB2.com



Billy Bookcase (with doors), medium brown, $257, ikea.ca

Bed Lifts, $13, bedbathandbeyond.ca

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Above prices include house, lot, GST, connection fees & piles. Images are artist renditions and are subject to change.

Portobello and chestnuts: Earthy duo

The chestnuts add a rich earthiness to this dish and make the mushrooms that much more meat-like. Look for the largest, juiciest-looking portobellos for this dish. If your mushrooms are smaller, you may have extra stuffing; stir in half a beaten egg and bake in a gratin dish alongside your mushrooms.

Ingredients

- 12 large portobello mushrooms
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) olive oil, divided

Chestnut Stuffing

- 50 ml (1/4 cup) butter
- 250 ml (1 cup) chopped onions
- 250 ml (1 cup) chopped celery
- 5 ml (1 tsp) cracked fennel seeds
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) chopped garlic
- 575 ml (2 1/3 cups) vacuum-packed peeled roasted chestnuts (about 400 g/14 oz), chopped
- 1 l (4 cups) fresh bread crumbs
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 75 ml (1/3 cup) unsweetened apple juice
- Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
- Rich Red Wine Sauce (see below)

1. Heat oven to 220 C (425 F). Cut off mushroom stems flush with caps and chop. You should have about 375 ml (1 1/2 cups).

2. In a large skillet, heat 30 ml (2 tbsp) of the olive oil over high heat. Working in batches, add mushroom caps to pan and fry for 1 to 2 minutes per side or until just beginning to soften. Transfer gill side up to a baking sheet. Repeat with remaining mushroom caps, adding more oil to pan as needed. Set aside.

3. Melt butter in the same skillet over medium heat. Add onions, celery and fennel seeds and sauté for 10 minutes or until slightly caramelized. Add garlic, chestnuts and chopped mushroom stems and sauté for 2 minutes or until mushrooms are juicy. Remove from heat.

4. Stir bread crumbs and parsley into stuffing mixture. Add enough apple juice to moisten stuffing well. Season well with salt and pepper. Divide stuffing into 6 portions and place on top of each of the mushroom caps on the baking sheet. Top with remaining 6 mushroom caps, gill side down, to make a kind of sandwich. Do not totally enclose the stuffing. Roast for 15 minutes or until mushrooms are tender and stuffing is crisp around the edges. Serve drizzled with Rich Red Wine Sauce. **BOTH RECIPES: THE CANADIAN PRESS/ THE FLAVOUR PRINCIPLE BY LUCY WAVERMAN AND BEPPI CROSARIOL. PHOTOGRAPHY BY RYAN SZULC. PUBLISHED BY HARPERCOLLINS PUBLISHERS LTD, 2013.**

Wine pairing

White Burgundy: Try this inventively woodsy, earthy dish with a nutty, mineral-laden white Burgundy (such as Macon or, if budget permits, Puligny-Montrachet) and bask in the subtle decadence.

Alternative: If you prefer red, uncork a Chianti.

This recipe serves six.

Condiment. Rich Red Wine Sauce

This recipe makes about 125 ml (1/2 cup) of sauce.

Pomegranate juice gives a wonderful colour to this sauce as well as a subtle flavour. This is similar to a beurre blanc sauce but made with red wine.

Ingredients

- 125 ml (1/2 cup) red wine
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) pomegranate juice
- 10 ml (2 tsp) light soy sauce
- 2 ml (1/2 tsp) granulated sugar
- 50 ml (1/4 cup) cold unsalted butter, cut in pieces
- Salt and freshly ground pepper

1. In a heavy pot, combine red wine, pomegranate juice, soy sauce and sugar. Bring to a boil over high heat, reduce heat and simmer for 10 - 20 minutes or until thickened. Remove from heat and stir in butter a few pieces at a time until fully incorporated and sauce is emulsified. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.

For your phone

Video Cookbook Pâtisserie (iPhone; free/ iPad; $1.99)

MIND THE APP
Kris Abel
@RealKrisAbel
life@metronews.ca

This video instruction series offers some delicious and creative pastries. But it's the free lessons on the fundamentals of fillings, icings, sauces, compotes and custards that make it a must-have.

Cookbook of the Week

Shining the spotlight on taste

The Flavour Principle takes foodies back to the basis of food: flavour.

Indian curry spices, fiery Thai chilis, lemony citrus, smoky barbecue rubs — these are all flavours that make us passionate about food and drink.

In their book, Lucy Waverman and Beppi Crosariol examine about a dozen flavours through recipes and drink pairings.

The Flavour Principle features more than 30 gorgeous menus covering flavours from all over the world. **METRO**

Alex Bilodeau, left, and Maxime Dufour-Lapointe won gold medals in freestyle World Cup moguls events on Wednesday in Wilmington, N.Y. MIKE GROLL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bilodeau continues to impress pre-Sochi

Freestyle skiing. Vancouver 2010 champ has Canadian company atop World Cup podium in Dufour-Lapointe

Alex Bilodeau says as long as he's on his game mentally, he'll be ready for anything the Sochi Olympics throws at him.

The native of Rosemere, Que., and defending Olympic champion won the gold medal Wednesday in Wilmington, N.Y., at the second-last World Cup event before the Sochi Games.

It was a great day for Canada, as Montreal's Justine Dufour-Lapointe won the women's event. Bilodeau took the men's final with 25.72 points. Americans Patrick Deneen and Bradley Wilson finished second and third respectively.

Bilodeau has had a string of podium finishes heading into the Olympics.

His World Cup results are considerably more impressive than they were heading into the 2010 Games, though Bilodeau says a lot has changed since he won Canada's first gold medal in Vancouver.

"Every Olympics is unique. I've evolved as an athlete and as a person and I'm getting prepared differently," he said. "The only thing I want to replicate is my mental state on top of that course, knowing I've done everything I could to get ready for that day. For the rest, it's going to be a different course, different quality of snow and bigger challenges with the other athletes competing."

Dufour-Lapointe put together a score of 23.90 on her final run to take the women's title. She came back from a distant 15th in qualifying to overtake Americans Heidi Kloser and Hannah Kearney for gold.

"That was a pretty big hit for me," she said of her initial qualifying run. "I was like OK, I did (make) mistakes. So now I just need to focus on the next step and pull out my tiger inside of me and really ski for myself and only myself." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Is bigger better?

Go to metronews.ca/gameon to find out how Canada's men's hockey team is planning to cope with the larger Olympic-sized ice surface in Sochi.

MLB

Kershaw lands landmark salary from Dodgers

Pitcher Clayton Kershaw agreed Wednesday to a $215 million, seven-year contract with the Los Angeles Dodgers, a person familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press, a deal that makes the two-time Cy Young Award winner baseball's first player with a $30 million average salary. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NFL

Manning vouched for Caldwell to Lions GM

Jim Caldwell's body of work helped him get a second opportunity to be an NFL coach.

Of course, there was that call from Peyton Manning, too.

Detroit Lions general manager Martin Mayhew says the Denver Broncos quarterback called him — unsolicited — during the team's search to throw support behind his former coach with the Indianapolis Colts. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NBA

Oden OK but Heat aren't in D.C.

The Washington Wizards had a 34-point lead against the Miami Heat reduced to single digits Wednesday night before holding on for a 114-97 win in Greg Oden's first game in more than four years. Oden played nine minutes and scored six points. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MacT sends Dubnyk south to Nashville

The Oilers traded Regina's Devan Dubnyk to the Nashville Predators on Wednesday. BRUCE BENNETT/GETTY IMAGES

It wasn't too long ago that Devan Dubnyk looked like the Edmonton Oilers' goaltender of the present and future.

After a couple of trades Wednesday, Dubnyk is now part of the past. The Oilers sent the 27-year-old to the Nashville Predators for forward Matt Hendricks, then acquired goalie Ben Scrivens from the Los Angeles Kings for a third-round pick in June's draft.

General manager Craig MacTavish told the Oilers' website that this was a culmination of a few phone calls and should provide a fresh start for both Dubnyk and Edmonton.

"We really felt for everybody it was a time for change with Devan," MacTavish said. "It gives us an opportunity to bring in another goalie in Ben Scrivens who's had, statistically, a very good season so far, and gives us an opportunity to have a pretty good look at him going forward here from now to the end of the year."

Dubnyk went into the season as Edmonton's starter, but the Regina native's struggles led to the signing of veteran free agent Ilya Bryzgalov to a one-year contract. In 32 games this season, Dubnyk is 11-17-2 with a 3.36 goals-against average and .894 save percentage.

Dubnyk's set to be an unrestricted free agent July 1, for being a consummate professional this season.

"I think when a season goes this way, I think no one really feels safe and everybody accepts that there's a possibility of something happening," Dubnyk told the team's site. "But when it does, it just catches you off-guard." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
Be honest with friends today, even if what you have to tell them is not what they want to hear. Having said that, maybe what you think is bad news is good news in their opinion.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
Any plans you make now are under the influence of the full moon, so try not to take them too seriously. A lot depends on whether you made them rationally or emotionally.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
Your ideas are as good as anyone else's but for some reason you think you are not as smart as your rivals. They may have fewer self-doubts but where intelligence is concerned you are way out in front.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
You may have a hard time controlling your emotions today but in a way that's good because, as usual, you have been keeping your feelings bottled up inside. Shout and scream if you have to.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Don't take it personally if loved ones are hard to get through to today. It seems they have a lot on their minds. If there are issues you need to discuss, wait until tomorrow when they won't be so worried by life.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Keep your ideas to yourself and stay tight-lipped even if your best friends ask what you are up to. That applies just as much on the work front. The less others know, the better for you.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Someone who envies your calm demeanor will turn up the heat today in the hope that you will start to sweat, but what they don't know is that you thrive on this sort of pressure.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Don't get upset if others don't seem interested in what you have to tell them. It's unlikely you will get much sense out of them over the next 24 hours.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Your words will carry more weight if you keep what you have to say to the point. Don't bother with explanations, just say what you mean and leave no one in any doubt that you mean what you say.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Some people may not deserve your assistance but as the moon is full in your opposite sign, you should be considerate. However, don't be so considerate that you let slip information that could help rivals get rich at your expense.

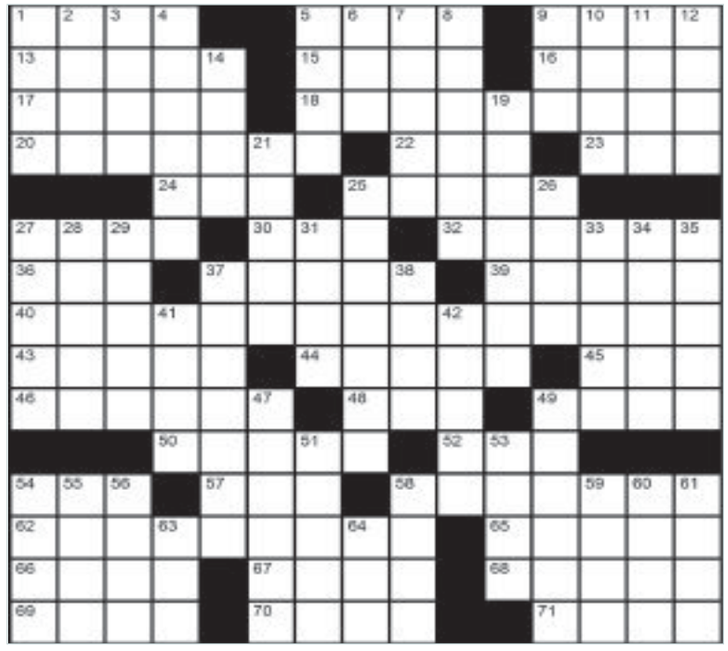
♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Today's full moon urges you to get your head out of the clouds and focus on the facts. You will have to tighten your belt financially over the next few weeks but it will only hurt if your attitude is wrong.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You may find it hard to stay focused today. You are advised to stop trying and let the cosmic winds blow you where they will. All roads lead to where you are destined to be. Why struggle? SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



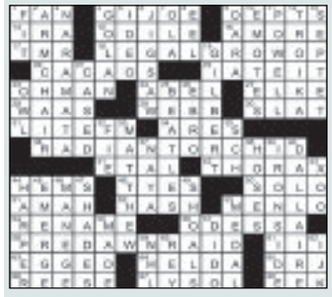
Across

1. Canadian singer of "Can't Choose" feat. Kardinal Offishall
5. NHL officials
9. Heel height unit
13. Overseas moneys
15. Medley
16. Casanova
17. Express
18. Canadian talk show icon who early on piloted a helicopter as a traffic reporter: 2 wds.
20. "SCTV" polka duo, The __ Brothers
22. Certain constellation
23. She's opposite
24. Dietary letters
25. Actress Sharon
27. Pairs
30. Lady's love
32. F's music equivalent, _ __
36. Bob & Doug interjections
37. WWI: Canada's coming of age on the world stage
39. Pointing-an-arrow person
40. Route 99's other name in BC: 4 wds.
43. Popeye creator, E.C. __
44. White wine of Italy
45. Fuss
46. Smart __ (Wise guys)
48. Which person?
49. Martha of "Some Came Running" (1958)
50. Writer, Madame de __ (b.1766 - d.1817)
52. Actor Stephen
54. Elvis record label
57. Not their
58. Needle
62. CBC, e.g.: 2 wds.
65. People of the Arctic
66. Fever symptom
67. Novelist Ms. Ferber
68. Canadian lingerie retailer, La __
69. Autoshop repair
70. Rockefeller Center muralist
71. "Begone!"

Down

1. Ms. Simpson, to pals
2. Baseball's Babe
3. Apothecary weight
4. Diarists
5. Drove
6. Yalie
7. Last
8. Evening party
9. Pique
10. Chris of "Sex and the City"
11. Aww-inspiring :)
12. Canadian luggage brand since 1986
14. Post
19. The Northwest __
21. Heaves
25. Englishman Archibald Belaney (b.1888 - d.1938) ...during his life in the Ojibwa culture in Canada: 2 wds.
26. __-Tzu
27. W Network's current docu-series "__ & Scott" about Canada's ice dancing champs
28. Tire
29. Meryl Streep/ Julia Roberts movie, "August: __ County"
31. Annoys
33. Direct selling company
34. Novelist Charles' bookish surname (b.1814 - d.1884)
35. Comic legend Richard
37. Saskatchewan city
38. Ex-ruler of Iran
41. Tie accessories
42. Soap brand
47. Food toppers
49. Metric singer Emily
51. Show wear due to wind and rain
53. Greek goddess of discord
54. Carangid fish
55. Press
56. Sentence part
58. Tiff
59. Now, to Nero
60. Pyramids place
61. Louisiana, for one, in French
63. Drenched
64. Time off, slang-style

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

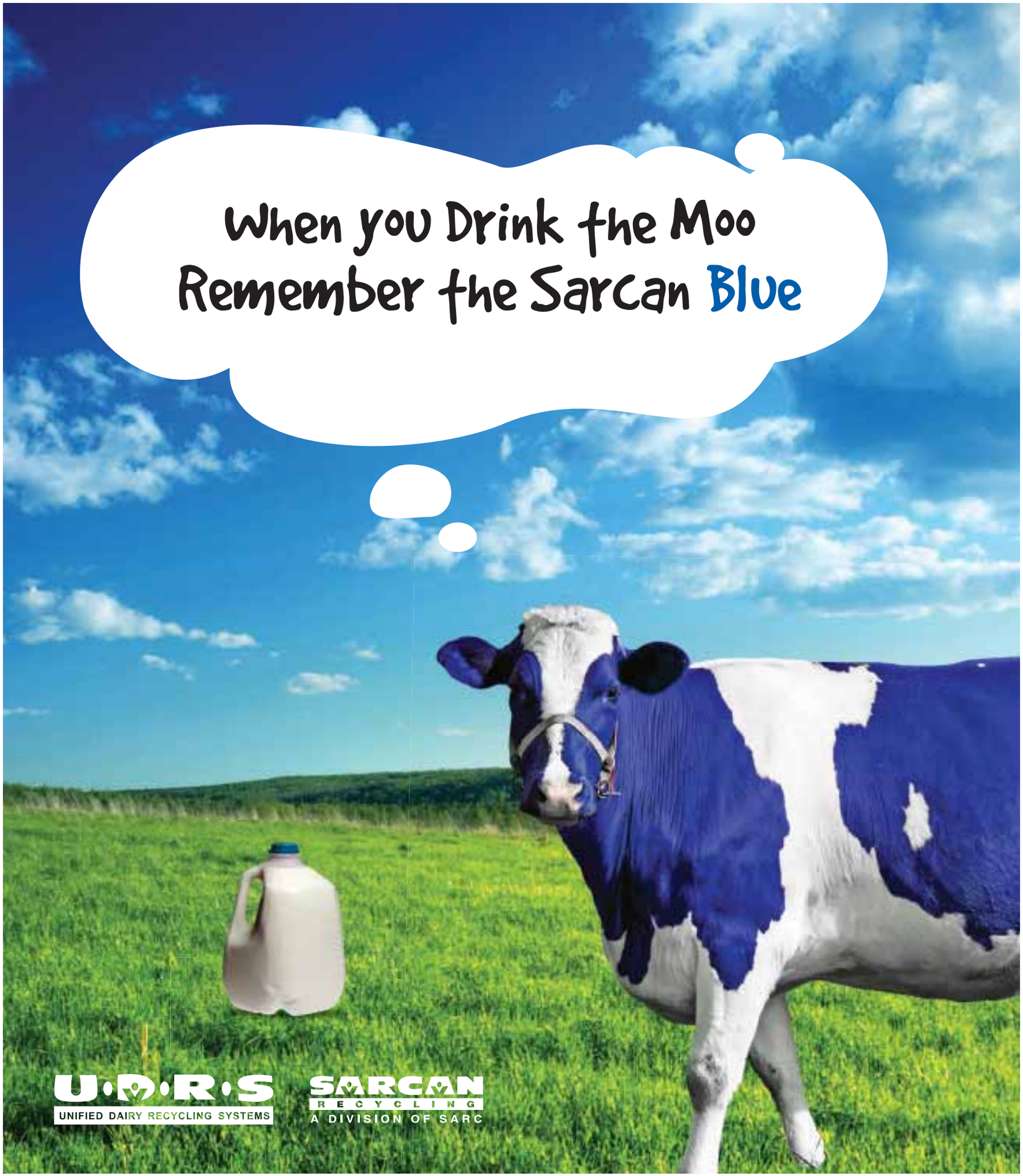
Yesterday's Sudoku

8	3	2	5	7	9	1	6	4
4	9	7	2	1	6	3	5	8
6	1	5	4	3	8	7	8	2
2	8	1	3	5	7	6	4	9
7	5	4	6	9	1	2	8	3
9	6	3	8	2	4	5	1	7
5	7	9	1	4	2	8	3	6
1	2	8	9	6	3	4	7	5
3	4	6	7	8	5	9	2	1

Today
-7°/-11°
Variable

Friday
0°/-9°
Variable

Your #1 weather forecast now available in HD.
HD
TWN incorporates MSC data


When you Drink the Moo
Remember the Sarcan Blue
U·M·R·S
UNIFIED DAIRY RECYCLING SYSTEMS
SARCAN
RECYCLING
A DIVISION OF SARC